United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.13

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
13th meeting
Tuesday, 23 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 *(continued)*

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman: In accordance with the programme of work and timetable, this morning the First Committee will continue the second phase of its work.

Mr. Noboru (Japan): I have asked for the floor to introduce the draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", contained in document A/C.1/56/L.35. Each year since 1994, the Government of Japan has submitted a draft resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons, which has always been adopted with overwhelming support. Last year, in the light of the successful 2000 NPT Review Conference, we submitted a draft resolution that stressed the importance of implementing the conclusions of the NPT Review Conference, with a view to accomplishing the total elimination of nuclear arsenals, taking into full account the unequivocal undertaking agreed by the nuclear-weapon States in the Final Document of the Conference.

Despite the adverse trends in nuclear disarmament — indeed, because of such trends — we have decided to submit the draft resolution again this year. We strongly hope that it will again command broad support and that it will provide a solid foundation for future progress in nuclear disarmament. I would also like to underline that this draft resolution is a manifestation of the genuine wish of the people of Japan to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world at the earliest possible date.

Let me now explain some of the salient points in the text. First of all, the draft resolution continues to fully endorse the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, despite the current uncertainties surrounding strategic stability, nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and it stresses the central importance of the Document's implementation. We have included the phrase "equivocal undertaking", already agreed at the 2000 Review Conference, in operative paragraph 3 (e), because we regard it as fundamentally important, and we believe that such importance can be better stressed in an operative paragraph than in a preambular paragraph. I hope that strong support for this draft resolution will have a positive impact on the forthcoming NPT review process leading up to the Conference to be held in 2005, beginning with the first Preparatory Committee meeting next spring.

Secondly, in paragraph 3 (a) the draft resolution recognizes the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) despite the situation of sluggishness that is impeding the Treaty's entry into force. The draft resolution also calls for the continuation of moratoriums on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions, pending the early entry into

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force of the CTBT. This step, although not legally binding, aims at ensuring that no nuclear test explosions will ever be conducted.

Thirdly, in paragraph 3 (f), the resolution encourages both Russia and the United States to continue their intensive consultations on offensive and defensive systems and calls for deep reductions by both countries in their strategic offensive arsenals. At this juncture, we believe that such a step by both Russia and the United States is absolutely necessary if we are to achieve our aim of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Fourthly, the draft resolution calls for the early commencement of the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament as early as possible during the 2002 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, bearing in mind the terrorist attacks on September 11 and the recent events involving anthrax in the United States, the draft resolution, in paragraph 10, calls upon all States to maintain the highest possible standards of security, effective control and physical protection of all materials that could contribute to the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. We believe this measure is very relevant to the prevention of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction.

The draft resolution also contains many other important elements to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. I hope that it will be adopted with overwhelming support.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I have the honour of introducing, on behalf of 63 sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.24, "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

I also wish to acknowledge that after document A/C.1/56/L.24 was printed, besides those 60 countries listed in the draft resolution, Samoa and Namibia also decided to sponsor the draft. For technical reasons, the name of Guinea, an original sponsor, does not appear on the list contained in document A/C.1/56/L.24. We request the Secretariat to revise the list accordingly. I should point out that the majority of the sponsor countries are members of the four existing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

This is the sixth consecutive year that a draft resolution on this important matter has been introduced for the consideration of the First Committee. Once again, as was the case last year, Brazil is honoured to be joined by New Zealand as the initiators of this draft resolution. This initiative garnered 159 votes in favour at the last session of the General Assembly, continuing the adoption by overwhelming majority that has characterized these resolutions since 1996. We express the hope that the draft contained in document A/C.1/56/L.24 will enjoy the same broad support.

This year's draft resolution has no changes relative to resolution 55/33 I, except for updates. The resolution adopted last year included some important changes, and language that reflected a balanced approach between the aspirations of members of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the concerns expressed by interested delegations. The maintenance of the same language is yet another reassurance that the text of this draft resolution will not be disconnected from reality.

In the nuclear disarmament area, one of the most significant developments of recent decades is the fact that, in several parts of the world, the nuclear option has already been ruled out.

A nuclear-weapon-free world is an aspiration and a common responsibility of the entire international community. The objective of eliminating nuclear weapons is reinforced by extending, through new nuclear-weapon-free zones, the geographical space where they are illegal. We support the consolidation of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the creation of new ones.

The regional treaties, with the addition of the Antarctic Treaty, contribute to freeing from nuclear weapons the southern hemisphere and the adjacent areas north of the equator where the treaties apply. The States parties to those treaties, in close consultation with their neighbours, renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons and accepted stringent verification commitments to that effect.

Our initiative is aimed at achieving the recognition by the General Assembly, for the sixth consecutive year, of the progressive emergence of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Such recognition should be considered a confirmation of the commitments of the international community to non-proliferation and disarmament.

We want to reiterate that as in previous years, our draft resolution does not create new legal obligations. Neither does it contradict any norm of international law applicable to navigation, such as those contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We call upon States that have not yet done so to move towards ratification of the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and their protocols.

The idea that most of the globe is nuclear-weapon free is a powerful beacon. It adds momentum to the process of nuclear disarmament and bolsters the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We wish to put on record our appreciation for all those who voted in favour of resolution 55/33 I last year. We expect to continue deserving their support.

Ms. Burtt (Australia): Australia is strongly committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament and to practical steps that contribute to that goal. Adherence to and the strengthening of the existing non-proliferation and disarmament framework is a key element of that process.

The dreadful events of 11 September have underlined the security value of our efforts towards non-proliferation and disarmament. Australia, like other countries, welcomed the contribution of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to taking forward those efforts. We also welcomed the strong support for draft resolutions of the First Committee last year that reaffirmed the NPT Final Document. This was an indication of the international community's undiminished commitment to the NPT and to the practical measures agreed on at the 2000 Review Conference.

As we approach the start of the 2005 NPT review cycle, we believe it is appropriate to recall the spirit of cooperation and commitment which enabled the good results achieved in 2000. Australia believes that with a similar approach we can take forward our efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We therefore welcome the submission of document A/C.1/56/L.35, Japan's draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons". We particularly welcome those paragraphs in the draft resolution which give expression to the outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and which underscore the importance of their implementation at an early stage. We hope the draft resolution will again attract wide support, including from the nuclear-weapon States.

While it is yet to enter into force, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has already made a powerful contribution to non-proliferation and disarmament. With 161 signatures and 84 ratifications, the Treaty is a clear expression of the international community's collective will to halt nuclear-weapon test explosions. We look forward to working with others to advance the objective of entry into force at the forthcoming Conference to be convened in accordance with article XIV of the CTBT.

Australia is pleased to be associated with the efforts of New Zealand and Mexico in submitting document A/C.1/56/L.10, the draft decision on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to the First Committee. It is our sincere hope that the decision will be adopted by consensus.

The international community has long identified the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty as one of the most urgent disarmament and non-proliferation steps the international community should take. Yet, despite that idea's repeated endorsement by all States present here, the Conference on Disarmament has failed to agree on a programme of work, and cut-off treaty negotiations have yet to commence. Australia welcomes the submission of document A/C.1/56/L.31 by Canada as an expression of the determination of the international community to work together to conclude a multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We very much hope this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Australia looks forward to joining with other delegations in the course of the First Committee's work in supporting draft resolutions that make a useful and practical contribution to our collective efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): The delegation of Egypt has the honour to present, on behalf of States members of the League of Arab States, a draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.25 under agenda item 77, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

In order to accommodate the different concerns of many interested delegates, the draft resolution was submitted this year without introducing any changes; thus, it contains the same language as last year's resolution.

The draft resolution reflects the prevailing realities as they stand today in the Middle East. Such realities underline a basic fact in this region, namely, that Israel remains the only State in the region which has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and that is precisely what is objectively stated in the eighth preambular paragraph. This, as we may underscore, is neither name-calling, nor singling out, nor of a confrontational nature; it is simply a clear reflection of reality, stated in a carefully measured and descriptive manner.

The achievement of universal adherence to the NPT remains a cardinal priority, not only for the Middle East region, but also for the international community as a whole. Universality consolidates the edifice of the NPT regime. This is underscored by the Treaty itself and has been subsequently confirmed by the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted on May 11 1995 by the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation on Nuclear Weapons; in the provisions of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the same Conference; and, lastly, by the 2000 NPT Final Document.

The draft resolution conveys the concern of the international community over the continued presence of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in the Middle East and the risk of nuclear proliferation in the region resulting therefrom. This issue is of particular importance and priority today since, as I stated before, all countries in the Middle East, except one — Israel — have become parties to the NPT and accepted the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on their nuclear activities.

On 19 May 2000, the States parties to the NPT took a leading step in addressing this concern by distinctly recognizing the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East and by emphasizing in explicit and unequivocal terms the importance of Israel's acceding to the NPT and placing all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. The consensus Final Document adopted by the 2000 NPT Review Conference is a positive contribution to all non-proliferation endeavours in the Middle East. The draft before the First Committee, for the second year, flows from this consensus. It reflects in paragraph 2 the principles and language that were accepted and adopted unanimously by States parties to the NPT in May 2000.

Needless to say, the continuation of such an imbalance and asymmetry between the legal obligations and commitments of States on the Middle East cannot but further aggravate serious security concerns over the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and undermine the efforts deployed by various regional and extra-regional parties aimed at establishing confidence-building measures, in particular those efforts aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Egypt, on behalf of States members of the League of Arab States, hopes to receive the overwhelming support of member States for this draft resolution. Last year, an unprecedented 157 votes in favour of the resolution came as direct support for our endeavours. This support came from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and elsewhere. We hope that, this year, this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Sood (India): I have the honour, on behalf of my Ambassador, to introduce a draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", contained in document A/C.1/56/L.12. It has so far been sponsored by Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Sudan and Vietnam. We hope that this list will increase quite soon.

It is more than a decade since the cold war ended. The nature of threats to the security of nations has mutated to take on new forms, as we have experienced in recent times. The threat of a global nuclear holocaust may have receded, but, as long as nuclear weapons continue to be viewed as a legitimate currency of power, with certain States claiming the exclusive right to possess them in perpetuity, the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, whether by States or by non-state actors, has increased.

Doctrines of first-use of nuclear weapons have been revalidated and reaffirmed by some who reserve the right to use nuclear weapons even against non-

nuclear threats. There is a need to address this unacceptable threat to humanity at various levels. At the level of political commitments backed by legally binding agreements, it is important for a reorientation of nuclear doctrines towards no-first-use and non-use, thus delegitimizing nuclear weapons globally.

The historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1996 made international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons. The international community needs to take decisive steps to delegitimize nuclear weapons as an essential element in the step-by-step process leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons. There is thus a requirement for a legally-binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The draft resolution, as in previous years, underlines that the use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to the survival of mankind; refers to the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict; and expresses the conviction that a multilateral agreement prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons would strengthen international security and contribute to the climate for the negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The draft resolution reiterates its request to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We regret that, due to the inflexible position of certain delegations, the Conference on Disarmament has so far not been able to commence negotiations on this subject.

In commending the draft resolution to this Committee as a measure that would be of far-reaching significance and perhaps constitute the first nuclear disarmament agreement, the Indian delegation, along with all those which have sponsored it, expresses the hope that it will receive the widest possible support in this Committee. A positive vote for this draft resolution will also be a vote of confidence that the international community can take decisive steps on the path leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Ordzhonikidze (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation, together with the delegations of Belarus and China, has introduced draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.1, entitled "Preservation of and compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems" (ABM Treaty), and wishes to place it before the Committee.

The draft resolution is similar to resolution 55/33 B of the previous session of the General Assembly, as the relevance of its objectives has not diminished but, to the contrary, has increased in the light of the current international situation. In the preamble, we have merely added a reference to resolution 55/33 B of 20 November 2000. In addition, operative paragraph 7 of the earlier text has been deleted, as it is no longer relevant, relating as it did to the United States decision of 1 September 2000 not to authorize at that stage the deployment of the missile defence system. A corresponding amendment has been also made to the last operative paragraph of the resolution.

The introduction of the draft resolution reflects the principled and consistent position of the Russian Federation in support of the ABM Treaty as a cornerstone of the contemporary world order and of strategic stability. We are convinced that it continues effectively to play its role as one of the main pillars of the international legal framework in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The draft resolution is of a non-confrontational character. It is based on the wording of the Treaty itself. Our text is not directed against any country and does not infringe upon anybody's interests. It is intended by its sponsors to ensure the continuity of the position taken by the international community in support of the ABM Treaty, to preclude the Treaty's revision or erosion, to prevent the deployment of Treaty-banned ABM systems on the territory of a country and thus to ensure the preservation of the Treaty as it is and to ensure full compliance with its provisions.

Though the number of countries participating in the ABM Treaty is limited, the Treaty is relevant to the security of practically every State, and compliance cannot be viewed merely as the private business of participants. In the more than 25 years of its existence, the ABM Treaty has proved its effectiveness and viability. During the entire period, it has been ensuring stability and the balance of forces in the world, playing a decisive role in curbing the arms race. The great importance of the ABM Treaty for nuclear disarmament has been recognized by practically all

States. Indeed, it provided fundamental strategic prerequisites for the conclusion of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF), START I and START II Treaties. Moreover, nuclear disarmament, which had previously been an abstract concept, became one of the priority practical tasks of the international community. In their deep organic interrelationship, both nuclear disarmament and the fate of the ABM Treaty concern all countries of the world without exception.

The international community has expressed its position on the ABM Treaty by adopting, two years in a row, resolutions in support of the Treaty. Those resolutions have clearly played a positive role in the creation of an appropriate atmosphere with respect to the ABM Treaty. I would like to recall that in the Final Document adopted by consensus at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the ABM Treaty was recognized as a key factor in ensuring strategic stability and as a basis for the reduction of strategic offensive weapons.

The objective relationship between defensive and offensive weapons is reflected in the preamble of the ABM Treaty, which specifically states that measures to limit ABM systems would be a significant factor in curbing the race in strategic offensive arms. That relationship was confirmed once again in the joint statement made by Russia and the United States at Genoa in July this year. And, as was noted by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir V. Putin, at the joint news conference he and President Bush of the United States held at Shanghai on 21 October,

> "we made progress here. First of all, it relates to START issue. We reaffirmed our mutual intention to reduce strategic offensive weapons. And now our task is to develop parameters of such reductions and to design a reliable and verifiable method to reduce nuclear arsenals of Russia and the United States".

Another important intention of the Parties, the increasing relevance of which is self-evident, is also reflected in the preamble of the Treaty:

> "to achieve at the earliest possible date the cessation of the nuclear arms race and to take effective measures toward reductions in strategic arms, nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament".

Proposals by the Russian Federation in that regard are well-known: to reach an agreement with the United States on the reduction of strategic offensive weapons to the level of 1,500 warheads for each party by the year 2008 and, possibly, to even lower levels afterwards. Readiness for such deep reductions has repeatedly been publicly confirmed by the Bush Administration too.

At the 21 October news conference in Shanghai, President Putin confirmed Russia's position with regard to the ABM Treaty, which he called

> "an important element of stability in the world. But we agree — and I have said it several times — that we should think about the future, look forward and adequately respond to potential future challenges. We are ready to discuss that with our American partners provided, of course, that we are given specific parameters for that discussion".

Under these circumstances, we should exercise the utmost care with regard to both the ABM Treaty and the international legal architecture in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in general. The erosion of that architecture would lead to a legal vacuum and to strategic chaos. And that particular scenario would serve the purposes of those forces that want to destabilize the world situation, including, first of all, the forces of international terrorism. The tragic events of 11 September have highlighted the real threat to the entire civilized world coming from organized groups of terrorists who defy laws and human morality and who are ready to resort to the most horrific and inhumane means of destruction, including nuclear weapons. And the non-proliferation and reduction of those weapons are also promoted by the ABM Treaty.

Joint coordinated efforts by the international community are needed to combat that evil. It will be impossible to eradicate it solely through technological means, no matter how sophisticated, and through unilateral approaches to ensuring security. There is a greater need than ever for international solidarity in combating terrorism and in consistently intensifying overall efforts to strengthen strategic stability. It is necessary to concentrate human and financial resources on efforts to counteract real and current, rather then far-fetched and hypothetical, threats and risks.

The draft resolution on the preservation of and compliance with the ABM Treaty introduced by Russia

together with Belarus and China serves exactly these goals. We hope that our draft resolution will be widely supported.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The discussion on nuclear weapons now focuses on the potential deployment of an anti-missile defence system. This issue has far-reaching consequences for our future. It signals a critical juncture. We are facing a choice. On one hand, there can be a world in which the existence of nuclear weapons and the increasing number of States with nuclear capabilities is perceived as a fact of life. On the other, we can have a world in which the number of nuclear weapons is gradually decreasing, all the way to their complete elimination.

The development of an anti-missile defence system could lead to the renewal of nuclear tests and the deployment of new nuclear-weapons systems. It could also strengthen the lack of desire to carry out further reductions in existing nuclear arsenals. It could also become a signal that possessing nuclear weapons will continue to be the most serious factor in international relations. For certain States, it could also become an incentive for developing their own nuclear capabilities, which would lead to further horizontal nuclear proliferation.

The Republic of Belarus shares the widespread alarm over the threat that an anti-missile shield, if one were created, would pose for the stability of the international arms-control regime. If measures are not taken to ensure that existing international treaties are complied with, the deployment of an anti-missile defence system could lead to further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Given the very important role that the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) plays in the existing ensemble of agreements at the global level, which goes far beyond its initial bilateral goal, we are concerned that the possible withdrawal of any of the parties from the Treaty would threaten the long-term prospects for the limitation and, in the final analysis, elimination of nuclear weapons. The ABM Treaty is the cornerstone of the existing nuclear-arms control regime. Because it limits the arms race and provides for the possibility of the elimination of nuclear weapons, weakening the Treaty could have very serious consequences for nuclear-arms control and their elimination.

The strict compliance with all of international agreements in the area of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation is the basis for the provision of further progress in trying to reach our ultimate goal — namely the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, the reduction of the danger of global and regional conflicts and the maintenance of peace and stability for one and all, without exception.

Throughout its soon-to-be 30-year existence, the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems has been one of the fundamental international agreements that is called on to provide for strategic stability, prevent the occurrence of new cycles of an arms race and promote the radical reduction in nuclear weapons. There is no doubt that the Treaty determines the whole system of coordinates for global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The viability of the Treaty, as a whole, is thus of utmost importance not just for the parties to the Treaty but for the international community as a whole. The duty to refrain from deployment of an anti-missile defence system on the territory of the country and not to create the basis for such a defence is one of the key provisions of the ABM Treaty, and can be viewed not only within the context of compliance with the Treaty by the parties but can be put to broader use, for example with a view to preventing the dangerous proliferation of missiles and missile technologies.

The very important additional agreement signed in 1997 helped further strengthen the effectiveness and viability of this extremely important Treaty. Parties to the Treaty undertook to comply with the provisions of the Treaty in full in order to preserve the essence of the Treaty, without bringing into question or re-examining its basic provisions. The deployment of the national missile defence system will bring to nought all of the efforts deployed by the international community earlier in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation by undermining the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) I and START II and the Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF), and will lead to the creation of conditions that will escalate the arms race in other spheres.

In this regard, my delegation, together with the delegations of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation, is once again submitting a draft resolution, entitled "Preservation of and compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic

Missile Systems". The goal here is to give positive impetus to the efforts of the international community at providing for and strengthening international security, stability and predictability.

We do hope that this draft resolution will meet with the widest possible support.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): This year marks the third time that the General Assembly is considering the item "Preservation of and compliance with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems". The last two sessions of the General Assembly adopted this resolution by an overwhelming majority. This has fully demonstrated the support of the international community for the preservation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) Treaty and its opposition to the development of missile defence systems. The international community does not want to see the loss of the hard-won achievements made over the years in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

Like the majority of the members of the international community, China is of the view that preserving the integrity and effectiveness of the ABM Treaty is of great importance to the maintenance of world peace and security. A decade has passed since the end of the cold war, and the international situation has changed significantly. However, the ABM Treaty still remains the cornerstone of global strategic balance and stability. The treaties on the reduction of nuclear weapons and, indeed, the entire international legal system on disarmament and arms control, of which the ABM Treaty constitutes a basis, have not lost their relevance. The Chinese delegation believes that discarding the ABM Treaty and developing missile defence systems will undermine global strategic balance and stability, be detrimental to world peace and security and trust among nations, and have a far-reaching negative impact on the international disarmament and arms-control process. Such a result would not be in anybody's interest.

It is our view that missile proliferation, a concern that the missile defence system is said to be based upon, can best be solved through political and diplomatic means on the basis of joint efforts by the international community and within the framework of the existing disarmament and arms-control treaties.

Since the end of the cold war, the world has been moving towards multi-polarization. We are now entering an era of globalization. In the new situation of diversified security threats, global security is becoming increasingly indivisible. While each country is entitled to take necessary measures to maintain its own security, we must also realize that in today's world the security of all countries is interrelated. The security of one country cannot be based on the insecurity of others. It has been borne out by both history and reality that a country, no matter how strong it is, will not be able to gain security by practising unilateralism against the cooperative spirit of the times. We hope that each and every country will heed the appeal of the international community and come to a sensible decision in favour of preserving the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), and desist from a missile defence programme.

Based upon the position and considerations I have spoken of, China has decided to co-sponsor once again the draft resolution introduced by the Russian Federation on the preservation of, and compliance with, the ABM Treaty. We call upon all other delegations to support this draft resolution. Our continued efforts to ensure the preservation of, and compliance with, the ABM Treaty will guarantee the smooth progress of the international disarmament endeavour in the correct direction.

Mr. Sood (India): My delegation has asked for the floor to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", which is contained in document A/C.1/56/L.14 and which has been co-sponsored by Bhutan, Cambodia, Colombia, Fiji, India, Jordan, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritius and Sudan.

With the end of the cold war, over a decade ago, there can be no justification for the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons being maintained in a state of hair-trigger alert and thereby creating unacceptable risks of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. There is indeed a need to save humanity from the catastrophic consequences of such a situation. Therefore, India has taken the initiative of introducing the draft resolution "Reducing nuclear danger", which has received widespread support in the General Assembly in recent years.

The draft resolution puts forward a modest and practical proposal calling for a review of nuclear doctrines and, in that context, for immediate and urgent steps to reduce the risk of unintentional and accidental

use of nuclear weapons. Many nuclear-weapon States and their allies have opposed the draft resolution on grounds that there were a number of technical steps involved in this. While fully acknowledging the technical complexities, we do believe that they can be overcome with the necessary political commitment. There is no doubt that the elimination of nuclear weapons under a non-discriminatory and multilaterally verifiable treaty will require complex negotiations; but that need not be reason to prevent us from taking interim steps to reduce the nuclear danger. In fact, the audacity of the recent terrorist attacks in this city increases the urgency for implementing steps contained in this draft resolution.

A number of programmes and measures for achieving global nuclear disarmament have been put forward by States, eminent individuals and non-governmental organizations. Each and every such programme has attributed the highest priority to the need for steps to be taken that reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons. In fact, the document that has been circulated today about the seminar on tactical nuclear weapons organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which I am sure delegations have before them, also makes a very strong reference to the concerns about the status and high level of operational readiness of tactical nuclear weapons, which led to unilateral initiatives in 1991.

In March 2000, the Secretary-General proposed in his report to the Millennium Assembly the convening of a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in order to help focus attention on the risks posed by the hair-trigger alert of thousands of deployed nuclear weapons. The consensus Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit on 8 September also resolved to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. In this context, we appreciate the initiative taken by Mexico in this Committee this year calling for specific preparatory steps, which are entirely consistent with the proposal we have the privilege of putting forward.

The report prepared by the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, and conveyed by the Secretary-General to this Committee in pursuance of resolution 55/33 N, contains the following seven recommendations for further action, which enjoyed broad agreement.

The recommendations are to promote a wide-ranging international dialogue on cooperative security; the taking of preliminary political and technical measures in preparation for the possibility of convening, at the appropriate time, a major international conference that would help to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers; de-alerting nuclear weapons; reviewing nuclear doctrines; further reduction of tactical nuclear weapons as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process; enhancing security at the global and regional levels by promoting increased transparency in all nuclear weapons programmes; and creating a climate for implementing nuclear disarmament measures through education and training programmes on the dangers of nuclear weapons, which would foster informed world public opinion to be able to exercise a positive influence on the political will to eliminate nuclear weapons. These recommendations are pragmatic and feasible. We would urge all delegations to extend all possible support to the Secretary-General for their implementation.

In order to make the draft resolution as widely acceptable as possible, we have kept it simple and free from references to contentious issues. We do believe that this draft resolution — "Reducing nuclear danger" — advocates a desirable objective. We hope that it will receive wide support in this Committee.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman): I have the honour to address the First Committee with regard to agenda item 77, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", and, more particularly, with regard to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.25, which was once again introduced by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Member States of the United Nations that are members of the League of Arab States (LAS), including my own.

While my delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Egypt in this regard and with the overall position of the Arab States expressed earlier by the representative of Jordan during the general debate allow me to make a few remarks regarding draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.25.

I must confess that, like other representatives, I had a lengthy statement to make. But, in order to save the Committee's time and to avoid redundancy, I will simply summarize its key points.

My country — and, I believe, the entire international community with few exceptions — is overwhelmed by the support that has been accorded the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Over the past few years, the NPT has evolved from a multilateral non-proliferation and to some extent disarmament treaty to a cornerstone of international efforts towards nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, despite that overwhelming support, some countries, very few, still remain outside that regime. We are of the opinion that today more than ever before the credibility and universality of the NPT are being tested.

In the region of the Middle East, one State, Israel, remains outside the NPT regime. That is totally unacceptable, and I believe it should not be accepted by the rest of the international community, because, as we all know, a nuclear threat in any part of the world is a nuclear threat to the world at large.

For more than two decades there has been growing momentum towards accession to the NPT and to other international instruments in the field of nuclear disarmament.

In the region of the Middle East, there is a real nuclear-weapon threat which stems from the refusal of one State to join the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Every year since 1974, the First Committee has apprised the Assembly of the situation through a draft resolution. We are dismayed that more than a decade has passed with no momentum when it comes to closing the glaring gap in the Middle East in terms of bringing peace and security to that region, as has been done in many other parts of the world. We use this forum to call upon the members of the international community, principally the Depositary States, to assume their responsibility as enshrined in the NPT and to convince those in our region that have not signed the NPT to do so.

We believe it is high time to demonstrate to the rest of the world that all countries are subject to the rule of law and that the NPT regime is a global endeavour by all peace-loving nations.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor this morning to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.26, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Colombia, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Fiji, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Viet Nam and my own delegation.

We believe that the provision of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States is an obligation that arises from the United Nations Charter. The Charter obligates Member States not to use or threaten to use force, and that obligation extends to the non-use or non-threat of use of any weapons, including nuclear weapons. Indeed, that fact was underlined in the first resolution the General Assembly adopted at its first session, which declared the need to outlaw nuclear weapons.

The demand for security assurances was raised by non-nuclear-weapon State in the 1960s, and it crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of negotiations on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The response of the nuclear-weapon States, reflected in Security Council resolution 255 (1968), was considered grossly inadequate by the non-nuclear-weapon States. At the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, agreement was reached on the conclusion of an international instrument that would provide binding and credible negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. However, the declarations made by four of the five nuclear-weapon States at that special session and, later, at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT and reflected in Security Council resolution 984 (1995), were also considered insufficient, qualified and partial by most of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

At the end of the cold war there was a general expectation that it would become easier for the nuclear-weapon States to extend negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States. Unfortunately, the situation, instead of becoming easier, has become more complex. That is so for several reasons. First, with the indefinite extension of the NPT, most nuclear-weapon States have presumed that they have the permanent right to retain nuclear weapons.

Secondly, the commitment in article VI of the NPT to complete nuclear disarmament has remained open-ended, even after the widely welcomed

commitment made at the 2000 NPT Review Conference regarding the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, new doctrines of the possible use of nuclear weapons, which are contrary to Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), have been propounded, involving for example the use of nuclear weapons against the use or threat of use of biological or chemical weapons, the use of nuclear weapons against terrorism and the development of "mini-nukes" for actual battlefield use.

Fourthly, the geographical scope for the use of nuclear weapons has also expanded with the expansion of nuclear alliances and the operationalization of provisions for the sharing of nuclear weapons and command and control among alliance members.

Fifthly, one major nuclear-weapon State which formerly adhered to the principle of non-first-use of nuclear weapons has now disavowed that principle and has adopted the posture of the first use of nuclear weapons.

Finally, two additional nuclear-arm States have emerged on the world scene, and there is one other presumed nuclear-arm State, whose status and obligations remain unclear.

Under the circumstances, the conclusion of credible negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States has gained greater urgency. The sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.26 seek to underline and to operationalize that sense of urgency.

The draft resolution is similar to those adopted by the First Committee at previous sessions. It reaffirms the urgent need to reach an early agreement on effective international arrangements on negative security assurances. It notes with satisfaction that there is no objection in principle to the idea of an international convention on that subject. It appeals to all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to work towards early agreement. It recommends further intensification of efforts to evolve a common approach and a common formula on this issue. Finally, it recommends that the Conference on Disarmament actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement on negative security assurances.

The sponsors believe that the conclusion of effective arrangements on negative security assurances could constitute a major confidence-building measure in the current tense international circumstances between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States as well as among the nuclear-weapon States. Secondly, it could contribute to reducing the nuclear danger. It could ease the threats that arise from new doctrines of nuclear use, and it could, overall, facilitate the negotiations on non-proliferation and on nuclear disarmament.

My delegation and the other sponsors therefore urge the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.26 by the widest possible majority.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of the members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and of the associated countries Bolivia and Chile. With respect to agenda item 74 (c), "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes", we wish once again to stress the importance that must be attached to regulating the international movement of nuclear waste and nuclear-fuel waste by sea. We want also to recall the position of the countries members of the Rio Group on this issue, as set out in the annex to document A/56/360 under the same agenda item.

We reaffirm the position of the Foreign Ministries of the coastal countries of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay — as set out in the joint statement of 17 January 1997, which was circulated as an official document of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and in a joint communiqué issued by those same countries on 21 December 2000. We stated then that

> "strengthening the regulation of the transport of radioactive material must provide for exchange of information on the routes selected, the commitment to recover radioactive materials in the event of accidents occurring to the transporting vessels and the payment of compensation in the event of damage or injury".

We recall that early this year further transport of radioactive wastes was reported near our coasts and along our maritime routes. In the light of the recent terrorist attacks, and as stated by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, during his opening remarks in the First

Committee, we must strengthen controls on nuclear installations and on the storage and transport of nuclear material. We believe that present circumstances justify continued support for continuous improvement in all measures and regulations aimed at making such transport safer, on the basis of the general principles of international law.

We therefore welcome with great satisfaction the recent adoption of resolution GC(45)/RES/28 by the General Conference of the IAEA, which marked major progress in developing the conceptual and political approach to the issue.

It is important to note that the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) attached particular importance to safety in the international transport of radioactive material. Moreover, the Disarmament Commission has stated that nuclear-weapon-free zones can serve to build bridges and promote international cooperation to ensure that the regions in question can protect themselves from environmental damage from radioactive waste and other radioactive substances and, where relevant, implement agreed international measures governing the transport of such substances.

Mr. Betancourt (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish first of all, Sir, to congratulate you from the bottom of my heart on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, and to wish you all success during your term of office. It is a source of particular satisfaction to have such a highly esteemed member of the Conference on Disarmament presiding over the work of the Committee. I assure you that you can count on my full cooperation and support as you carry out your responsibilities. I wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, who will be assisting you in your very important work.

I am speaking in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament to introduce the report of the Conference to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the work of its 2001 session (A/56/27). I use the word "work" and, for those of us who participated in that session, it truly was work. But there is reason to wonder how far we have come, and what we have really accomplished. Unfortunately, it appears that we have not made progress. Indeed, for the third consecutive year the Conference did not succeed in establishing subsidiary bodies or, therefore, in beginning its substantive work. Notwithstanding intensive consultations among member States on a programme of work, we were unable to narrow our differences on two main items: nuclear disarmament and the prevention of a nuclear arms race in outer space.

From the beginning of the 2001 session we made several attempts to break the deadlock. Moreover, three Special Coordinators were appointed: on the review of the Conference's agenda, on the expansion of its membership and on its improved and effective functioning. The Special Coordinators deserve our thanks for the time and effort they have devoted to their tasks. I believe that this constitutes an important step towards the gradual disentanglement of procedural problems from substantive issues: that is where it should all begin.

The difficulties we are encountering include an adverse international political climate and positions that pit some members States against others — especially on issues related to an arms race in outer space, strategic stability, plans for an anti-missile defence shield, proposals to modify the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) — as well as a lack of political will to negotiate on substantive issues on the Conference agenda. These are very obvious and utterly frustrating to us all. This is the negative international climate in which we find ourselves. These are the facts, and, undoubtedly, we are familiar with all of them.

But what about progress? Has there been any? I believe that there has been progress. I think that for the first time in the history of the Conference on Disarmament the Russian Federation has accepted the establishment of a provisional mandate to examine nuclear disarmament from a broader perspective. The United States has also expressed its readiness, within the context of ongoing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and a comprehensive programme of work, to accept the creation of a special committee on nuclear disarmament and a special committee on outer space issues.

I can also affirm that the appointment of three special coordinators and their work have allowed us to revert to the practice of making recommendations on the continuation of work during subsequent sessions. This innovation will make it possible to gradually undo

the linkages that have paralysed the Conference on Disarmament for many years.

Given this context, we will continue to diligently hold intensive consultations. I believe that much of our ability to galvanize work depends on that. We also hope that the upcoming first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will stimulate the beginning of the implementation of the decisions taken by the 2000 Review Conference on the establishment of special committees of the Conference on Disarmament on the ban on the production of fissile material for military purposes and on nuclear disarmament.

I am not going to risk predicting what will happen at the Conference on Disarmament next year. I will say only that notwithstanding the difficulties we continue to face, I sincerely believe that the Conference continues to be the sole, indispensable multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. The tragic events of September in New York and Washington, D.C., made us realize that we are not and cannot be alone. Therefore, from now on cooperation and international security must be our main path, and democratically agreed multilateral regional and international decisions must be the decisions that are most acceptable to the world.

We are aware of the political obstacles that have existed in the Conference on Disarmament for three years. The threat that weapons of mass destruction represent to the world has not yet been fully considered. Multilateral discussion of this issue has been on hold with no starting date set. But the events of September hit us all hard throughout the world. Their impact has placed us in a new international situation with a very different outlook in the field of disarmament and security. From this perspective, we must agree that the Conference on Disarmament must be strengthened as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament and, consequently, security issues.

Where will we go from here? How can we start to think more clearly and broadly, going beyond borders and immediate national interests? I know it is hard, but, desiring to establish an intensive and active dialogue, we must continue to abide by the spirit of consensus and cooperation.

I do not want to leave members with an exaggerated impression of what is possible. We are no longer working on that level. Rather, as we have been caught in this political gridlock for more than three years, I want to leave members with a sense of what is urgently needed for the good of the international community as a whole.

Finally, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I have the honour of introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.36, on the report of the Conference on Disarmament for consideration and adoption by consensus. The consensus adoption of this draft resolution will allow the Conference on Disarmament to play its important role in the global process of disarmament, and it will encourage the adoption of its programme of work and the elimination of the Conference's current state of paralysis.

Mr. Obidov (Uzbekistan): On behalf of the Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and my country, Uzbekistan, I would like to introduce the draft decision on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, which is contained in document A/C.1/56/L.48.

The Central Asian States consistently undertake measures aimed at maintaining and strengthening regional peace and security. Among those is the initiative of declaring Central Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The Central Asian States note with appreciation the support of all States for the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We also highly appreciate the efforts of the United Nations, especially of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, to support the activity of the regional experts group working on the completion of the draft regional treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

General Assembly consensus resolution 55/33 W of 20 November 2000 welcomed the desire of all five Central Asian States to finalize work on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region and the concrete steps they have taken to that end. Significant progress has been achieved to date in realizing these processes. As a result of these consultations, our countries have agreed to submit this draft decision, which calls for the inclusion of a separate item entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia" on the provisional

agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

On behalf of the countries of our region, allow me to express our sincere hope that this draft decision will have the support of all countries and will be adopted by consensus during the current session.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again we are gathered to discuss an issue of the greatest significance to us all: nuclear disarmament. After mankind has lived for more than 50 years with the atomic bomb, we still find ourselves compelled to fight for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Initially, there was an attempt to justify the existence of the arsenals of these weapons, and their continued growth, in the context of the so-called cold war. Now, without it, new excuses are being invented, and almost certainly tomorrow still others will be found.

Cuba, which has continuously demanded the total elimination of nuclear weapons, will stand firm in its commitment ensuring that one day humankind will be free once and for all from the danger they represent. We therefore support, and will continue to support, any measure or initiative clearly designed to remove them completely from the face of the earth, with no discrimination between States or any privilege that could make impossible the attainment of that end.

In this context, we appreciate the value of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.12, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", by which the General Assembly would request the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on an agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. We fully endorse its goals, and accordingly have again this year joined its sponsors.

Similarly, we recognize the importance of reducing the nuclear threat by lessening the real risk of their accidental use. Moreover, in this day and age, the revival of military doctrines contemplating the use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable. Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.14, "Reducing nuclear danger", contains these and other elements which we support.

The concern over the persistent deadlock in negotiations on nuclear disarmament makes it imperative that fresh initiatives to get the process going. We applaud all such initiatives, since there is merit in any proposal leading to a multilaterally negotiated agreement to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this spirit, we welcome the new proposal in draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.16, on a United Nations conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in the context of nuclear disarmament.

Unfortunately, not all the draft resolutions submitted under the heading of nuclear disarmament have the scope of the proposals I have just mentioned. Some even depart from the path that must lead us to achieving the priority goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. My delegation hopes that their sponsors will bear their limitations in mind. The Cuban delegation has made its views known to the authors of the respective drafts.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.38, "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Preparatory Committee".

The introduction of this procedural draft resolution, following the holding of the Sixth NPT Review Conference, which began on 24 April 2000, is part of the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty, as well as of recommendations and decisions adopted during various review conferences. This draft resolution is similar to resolution 51/45 A, "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its Preparatory Committee", adopted by the Assembly on 10 December 1996.

The present text recalls, in its preamble, resolution 2373 (XXII), adopted on 12 June 1968, to which is annexed the text of the NPT, and notes the provisions of article VIII, paragraph 3, of the Treaty regarding the convening of Review Conferences at five-year intervals. It also recalls the decision on strengthening the Treaty review process made by the 2000 Review Conference, which reaffirmed the provisions in the decision on strengthening the review process adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, under which the Review Conferences are to continue being convened every five years. Therefore, the next one is due to take place in 2005.

The draft resolution also refers to resolution 55/33 D of 20 November 2000, in which the Assembly welcomed the adoption by consensus of the Final Document of the Sixth Review Conference in 2000, and recalls the decision of that Review Conference that three sessions of the Preparatory Committee should be held in the years prior to the next Review Conference.

In its operative part, the draft resolution takes note of the decision of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to hold the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee in New York from 8 to 19 April 2002. It also requests the Secretary-General to render the necessary assistance and to provide such services as may be required for the 2005 Review Conference and its Preparatory Committee. I invite all delegations to lend their valuable support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Goussous (Jordan): My delegation would like to refer to draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.25, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", presented by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Arab States members of the Arab League.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.25 reflects realities of concern to all of us, since it conveys the concern of the larger international community over the presence of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in the Middle East and the risk of nuclear proliferation in the region resulting from the present status. This draft resolution is within the framework of the consensus Final Document adopted by the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We value this draft resolution in view of its relevance to the situation in the Middle East and hope that such a draft resolution with a noble cause will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation has the honour to introduce to the Committee a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", as contained in document A/C.1/56/L.45 of 18 October 2001. We are pleased to introduce it on behalf of the following delegations: Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tonga, Uruguay, Vietnam, Zambia, and my own delegation, Malaysia. My delegation expresses its gratitude to all the sponsors, as well as to those delegations that may decide to sponsor or support it eventually.

This draft resolution is an updated version of the resolution adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Fourteen of its preambular paragraphs and the four operative paragraphs are virtually identical to resolution 55/33 X of 20 November 2000. However, two new elements have been introduced, namely one at the end of the sixth preambular paragraph and an additional preambular paragraph, the tenth paragraph.

In the sixth preambular paragraph, we have added the phrase, "adopted at the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" at the end of the paragraph to indicate where the pledge was made. We are of the view that there is a continuing need to welcome the commitments made last year when the nuclear-weapon States parties took a positive and commendable step by making an "unequivocal undertaking ... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament" at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

We are all too aware of the fact that despite the so-called peace dividends resulting from the end of the Cold War, achievements in the disarmament area have fallen far short of our expectations. Progress in recent years, if any, has been negligible. There have, in fact, been a number of setbacks, *inter alia*, the weakening of existing nuclear-related disarmament, arms-control and reduction measures and a virtually complete standstill in negotiations on nuclear disarmament in both the bilateral and multilateral tracks. It is with this in mind that we have decided to incorporate an additional preambular paragraph, the tenth preambular paragraph, to this year's draft resolution. In the context of the current situation in the nuclear disarmament area, there is a felt need to stress "the importance of strengthening all existing nuclear-related disarmament, arms control and reduction measures."

I think it will be appreciated if I do not go into the details of the draft resolution. For the sake of brevity, therefore, suffice it for me to say that the four operative paragraphs remain the same as last year's, with the appropriate updating of a tactical nature.

It is clear from the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that States parties have a legal obligation not only to pursue but also to bring such negotiations to an early conclusion. This is consistent with the solemn obligation made by States parties under Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament, which calls for their determined pursuit of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons. The sponsors of this draft resolution consider this unanimous opinion of the World Court on the existence of this obligation as a clear basis for follow-up actions by Member States of the United Nations in their determined efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

The draft resolution, as reflected in operative paragraph 1, focuses on the disarmament obligations of States, as this was a conclusion arrived at unanimously by the International Court of Justice. Its implementation is entirely appropriate for the General Assembly, which has a mandate to promote disarmament negotiations. The draft resolution does not claim that operative paragraph 1 is the only decision of the Court that could have an influence on disarmament policy, or that there are no other actions which could be taken in light of the Court's decisions. In fact, in operative paragraph 3, encompassing the Court's decision as a whole, States are requested to inform the Secretary-General on the efforts and measures they have taken to fulfil their duties as underlined by the conclusions of the Court.

The Court, in arriving at its unanimous decision that Member States have an obligation not only to conduct but also to successfully conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament, reiterates the obligation on States parties to the NPT. The sponsors of this draft resolution continue to hold the view that the unanimous decision of the International Court of Justice, representing the full weight of the legal opinion of all members of the World Court, is an important contribution to the development of international law, which should not be summarily dismissed.

The challenge facing the international community of the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world remains a formidable one, requiring our total and unqualified commitment to the goals we set ourselves. Our final goal must remain the elimination of all of these weapons within a time-frame that, while distant, is nevertheless foreseeable, realistic and attainable, not at some vague, never-to-be-defined remote time in the future. Towards this end, nuclear disarmament must therefore remain a high priority issue on the global agenda and not be relegated to the backburner.

In submitting this draft resolution on behalf of its sponsors for the consideration of Member States, my delegation is confident that it will continue to receive the support of a large majority of Member States. We are confident that States which support multilateral negotiations eventually leading to the global elimination of nuclear weapons — a step to which we are all committed — will have no real reason to oppose this draft resolution, because it seeks to do exactly that in the long term. Once again, in introducing this draft resolution, my delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to its sponsors, as well as to delegations that will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): I am pleased to take the floor today on behalf of the delegation of Sweden and my own delegation and to have the honour to address the First Committee on the topic of non-strategic nuclear weapons.

Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee this year. I wish to assure you of the wholehearted support of my delegation in your important task of guiding us.

It is with great appreciation that we have noted the active discussion about non-strategic nuclear weapons that has taken place in the First Committee this year, both formally and informally. We also welcome the fruitful seminar about tactical weapons held in New York on 24 September, organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. We think that important questions were discussed. Here, I would like to refer, for example, to the question of how to shape and formulate the follow-up to the 1991 declarations and how to develop measures for increased transparency.

As stated two weeks ago by the representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is a major problem and a matter for concern. Next spring, we will enter the preparations for the next Review Conference of the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). I would like to draw members' attention to the importance of these preparations, which are a follow-up to the steps agreed in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. In paragraph 9 of article VI of that Document, the States parties agreed to

> "The further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process". (*NPT/CONF.2000/28, vol. I, p. 15*)

We are also encouraged by the decision on increased transparency by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to nuclear weapons capabilities and the implementation of agreements pursuant to article VI and as a voluntary confidence-building measure to support further progress on nuclear disarmament.

We do hope that the positive atmosphere in the First Committee this autumn will influence the deliberations in the Preparatory Committee next spring. Let me assure you, Sir, that Finland is ready, together with any like-minded country, to work towards this goal and the best possible implementation of the measures agreed upon at the last NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Markram (South Africa): Last year, the members of the New Agenda Coalition initiative successfully captured the outcome of the nuclear disarmament components, as agreed at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in their resolution "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". In the communiqué issued by the Foreign Ministers of the New Agenda Coalition on 8 October, they reaffirmed their determination to pursue the New Agenda initiative with continued vigour.

I would like to introduce the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/56/L.15, submitted by South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda partners: Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden. By this draft decision, the General Assembly would include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session the item entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda".

The Chairman: At this point in time, let me introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.49 before the Committee, entitled "Global efforts against terrorism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation". This is a draft resolution submitted by the Chairman of this Committee.

In the wake of the 11 September terrorist attacks, the draft resolution reaffirms multilateralism as an enduring principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. It emphasizes the contribution that progress in disarmament and non-proliferation can make to international peace and security and calls upon all Member States to renew their commitments to multilateral cooperation in these fields.

The events of 11 September were a dramatic wake-up call for greater international cooperation in addressing the problem of terrorism to ensure that the world is spared similar or even worse tragedies. The best — indeed, the only — effective way to combat terrorism is through enhanced international cooperation.

Since the attack on 11 September, the world community has demonstrated its solidarity in the global struggle against terrorism — a consensus that, as we recall, has been registered in a General Assembly resolution and in two Security Council resolutions. As the Secretary-General has said, we have to build on the wave of human solidarity to ensure that the momentum to work for a better world is not lost.

I believe that the time has come to build upon this consensus by drawing inspiration from our own general debate here in the First Committee, which took place in the first phase of our work and which faithfully reflected the new international context. The time has come to build upon this consensus by taking a second look at the way multilateral disarmament diplomacy has been performing and by recognizing the significant contribution that this Committee can make to counter terrorist efforts in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The United Nations has a unique role in promoting such multilateralism. Article 1 of the Charter provides that a fundamental purpose of this institution is

> "To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends".

Last year, the Millennium Declaration underscored that the responsibility for managing threats to international peace and security must be shared among the nations of the world. There is no common end more important than the survival of humankind and no responsibility more solemn than that of the leaders of all nations to work together against the gravest threats to international peace and security, such as terrorism, which transcend national borders. Multilateralism offers a collective means of addressing the ills of globalization — what the Secretary-General has called the problems of uncivil society.

The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.49, if nothing else, could provide a healthy reminder of our collective interdependence and of our collective duty. The subject matter of this draft resolution — which, as members will see, is not tied to any specific item on our agenda — should be an overarching theme in our deliberations in this Committee. If adopted, the draft resolution is destined to be a message to the outside world that this Committee, bearing in mind its mandate, is fully aware of its responsibilities in these particular times. This draft resolution, if adopted, should be indicative of a new state of mind and of a new spirit prevailing in this Committee as it faces the unprecedented challenges of the twenty-first century in the field of its mandate.

Adopting a draft resolution on the topic of the fight against terrorism in the area of the Committee's competence, which is disarmament and international security, seems of utmost importance to me. I, as the Chairman, will be working with all the delegations over the next couple of days to make sure that language acceptable to all on this issue can be found. I hope that the text of the draft resolution that I am introducing today accommodates the many concerns and the many viewpoints. But I wish to stress the point that the draft resolution should remain brief and general in character.

I will make a particular effort to reach consensus among the delegations. But I would also like to stress that if I fail in this attempt, I will withdraw the draft resolution. Putting this draft resolution to a vote showing division among us on this issue of primary importance would send a wrong signal. It would undermine the reputation of the First Committee, weaken the credibility of the United Nations and also call into question our collective resolve to take the necessary steps to combat terrorism. I hope that we can avoid such a situation, and I will be asking for the Committee's support in this endeavour.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Bar (Israel): Yesterday and today, the representative of Egypt introduced two draft resolutions regarding the Middle East. The first draft resolution, which is contained in document A/C.1/56/L.5, relates to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. Such a draft resolution has indeed been adopted by consensus for over 20 years. We shall continue to be a part of the consensus on this draft resolution, notwithstanding certain reservations regarding the modalities it contains. The overall objective is more important to us than the various differences on the text of the draft resolution, as important as those are.

The second draft resolution, which was presented to us today, relates to the so-called risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and is contained in document A/C.1/56/L.25. Here, my delegation categorically rejects both the overall objective and the specific wording of the draft text. This draft resolution singles out Israel, and is the only draft resolution to take issue with the sovereign right of a country to adopt a particular position with regard to an international convention. This draft resolution seeks to embarrass and pressure Israel; but I would like to assure the members of the Committee that this one-sided draft resolution will have absolutely no effect on Israel's position. Israel will not be pressured into compromising on issues relating to its national security. Moreover, if the draft resolution embarrasses anyone, it embarrasses only its sponsors. It is true that the language may not have changed from last year, but the entire context of international peace and security has changed. We need real solutions to real problems, and not politically divisive draft resolutions to virtual challenges that merely undermine confidence and sow distrusts.

Israel supports the objectives and principles of non-proliferation, and has an impeccable record in that regard. We have never adopted a policy against the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons regime. We joined the consensus on the draft resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone because that is an objective that should be achieved through direct negotiation, and not through imposition. The draft resolution on the risk of nuclear-proliferation in the Middle East does not further that objective, but only makes its attainment more remote by ignoring the real threats of proliferation in the Middle East, to which we referred in our speech in the general debate. Israel continues to believe that arms control and regional security in the Middle East can be changed for the better only by introducing the culture of dialogue and peace, and not by confrontation. We would hope that our neighbours in the region will ultimately adopt a similar approach and thus make the draft resolution on the risk of proliferation as obsolete as it is unhelpful.

In recent years, my delegation has been involved in the efforts to create a better international environment in the field of arms control by showing a constructive and flexible spirit wherever possible — sometimes despite our own positions. The support of members of the First Committee for the draft resolution on the risk of proliferation is a discouraging reaction to those efforts. We patiently await a positive change in that regard.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): I am sorry to prolong the debate on this matter, but I just want to refer to some of the comments just made with respect to the draft resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.

As I stated before, this draft resolution is not an embarrassment to the sponsors, and it is not an embarrassment to anybody. This draft resolution tries to reflect the prevailing reality in the Middle East, namely, that there is only one nuclear Power in the Middle East — Israel — and that it has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and has not placed its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) full-scope safeguards.

As I said before, this is not a confrontational draft resolution. Rather, it includes unanimously agreed wording contained in the NPT, refers to the NPT by name and highlights the importance of acceding to the NPT and placing nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards. Moreover, I do not believe that this is a discouraging draft resolution, as the delegation of Israel has said. It is an encouraging draft resolution that aims for more security and stability in the region.

I have many things to say in this regard, but I do not want to prolong the proceedings and will therefore stop here.

Organization of work

The Chairman: At this point I would like to invite delegations to kindly introduce their draft resolutions as early as possible during this phase of our work, in order to enable other delegations to make comments on them.

We all remember that yesterday we used only one hour of the time and facilities of the Committee. Again, I urge delegations to inscribe their names for earlier slots on the list of speakers so that we can organize our work in the most efficient manner possible. As I understand, that is what is actually going on for tomorrow's meeting. We have been regrouping statements, which is obviously of great benefit to the Committee.

I also want to inform the Committee that this year a total of five draft decisions and 46 draft resolutions have been submitted under various agenda items for consideration by the First Committee. As the Committee is aware, the programme of work and timetable have been set, so we will proceed to begin taking action on those draft decisions and draft resolutions on Wednesday, 31 October. That will be the beginning of the third phase of our work. A total of 11 meetings have been allocated for that stage of our work, which is supposed to last until Friday, 9 November, unless we can finish our business earlier.

In this connection, members will recall that, at the organizational meeting some time ago, I stated that I would follow a useful device of clustering the draft resolutions when we go into the third phase of our work. This is a practice that has evolved in the course of the past several years. Thus, tomorrow I will present to the Committee a paper that will group together the various draft resolutions into several clusters with a view to facilitating the task of the Committee and in order to streamline and to guide the action taken in this

Committee. It serves the purposes of clearance, transparency and high visibility.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following countries have become co-sponsors of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.1: Haiti;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.7: Benin;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.10: Uruguay;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.12: Nepal;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.13: Benin, Nepal and Sierra Leone;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.24: Benin;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.30: Greece;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.32: Uruguay;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.34: Benin and Uruguay;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.37: Greece;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.39: Uruguay;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40: Benin, Georgia and Uruguay;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.41: Greece;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.43: Brazil and Uruguay;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.45: Benin, Bolivia, Congo, Costa Rica, Guyana, Iraq, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, the Philippines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Tonga;

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47: Benin and Uruguay; and

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.50: India.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.